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SUBORDINATION IN MARXIST, GRAMSCIAN AND
SUBBALTERN CONTEXTS**

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THE FORMATIVE PHASE**

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**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
GOVERNMENT COLLEGE UNIVERSITY, LAHORE**

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For Correspondence

Tahir Kamran

Editor, The Historian,

Department of History, Government College University,
Katchehry Road, Lahore, Pakistan

E-mail: tahirkamran_gcu@yahoo.com
historian@gcu.edu.pk

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GOVT. ISLAMIA POST GRADUATE COLLEGE
CHINIOT

ABSTRACT

The ideology of Hegemony, Dominance and Subordination in Marxist, Gramscian and Subaltern perspectives has deep depiction of Colonial and Post-Colonial realities of States and societies of the third World. In this similar context, Rana Jit Guha has presented a close philosophical theme, which is based on the theoretical paradigms of Karl Marx, Antonio Gramsci and E.P. Thompson. The current study is basically covering the concepts and practice-oriented philosophical themes of Gramsci and Guha about the dominance of elite and privileged classes over marginalized and subaltern classes. In this context, the political, eco-social, cultural, and most importantly collective (Baradarism) aspects, which are constituting the Neo-Colonial realities about the dominance of Hegemonic classes and subordination of weak and working classes. Gramsci and Guha describe that the powerful segments of society also use soft and consent oriented means along with direct and coercion-oriented modes, to maintain and perpetuate their dominance; ultimately the interest of ruling classes is presented as the interest of subaltern

classes. Therefore, elite classes maintain their leadership in society, having vibrant strategy to maintain power, and directing majority's sense in their own favour either through consent and collaboration or via coercion and persuasion.

KEYWORDS

Ideology, Dominance, Subordination, Colonial, Consent, Coercion

Hegemony comes from a Greek word, which means "to lead". It denotes the idea of "standing first". But Karl Marx¹ and Antonio Gramsci² have used this word in altogether different context. In Marxist and Gramscian sense it implies "the dominance of ideas". It means that the domination is not necessarily exerted by physical power or by force rather it highlights the concept of dominance through more subtle means such as inclusive power over the economy, over the state apparatuses and cultural institutions, such as education and the media, through which the ruling class's interests are projected as the common interest. Generally the word, "Hegemony" also conveys the meaning of domination by consent and this very concept of hegemony is also used, to indicate the ways, in which different groups achieve consent, in order to acquire the leadership to dominate the society. And this particular concept of hegemony is also associated with historical blocs, political projects and social alliance in state and society.

In this very context, 'Hegemony' is also related with the conception of leadership in society, and this very concept of leadership is directly associated with the

strategy of winning and maintaining power in any of socio-political structure. A simple definition of hegemony may also be understood in the context of the adhering to a specific system, whereby the interests of one section of society, direct majority's common sense' through a flexible system of consent and collaboration.

'Hegemony' also denotes the domination by consent, actually this broader concept of 'hegemony' and 'dominance' was provided and popularized in 1930s by Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci who actually explored the question that how the ruling classes successfully projected and promoted their interests in society. Then, he provided the answer by defining hegemony in terms of the power of the ruling class to convince other classes that their interests are the interests of all.³

The term, 'Hegemony' also highlights that how the ruling classes are successful in establishing and maintaining dominance over the ruled. Gramsci further explained that how the desire of the ruled i.e. their right of self-determination, was cleverly suppressed by the ruling classes. He further highlighted the tactics and methods of sophisticated exploitation employed by these classes. These included 'hegemonic notion of greater good of all', 'the slogans of favourable social order of the things and 'the deceptive plans for stability and advancement of general society'.

He further contended that all these kind of proposals were presented and projected by the ruling classes.⁴ Gramsci further described that the ruling classes of previously colonized regions of the world, were basically following the general ways and essences of colonialism, it meant that the ruling classes indirectly affected the

thoughts of the ruled people, infact, the upper powerful classes constructed the thoughts of the lower classes, only for their own interests, but with the slogan of greater and general good; which was originally a basic tactic of imperial power in colonized areas.⁵

Antonio Gramsci further delineated the concept of hegemony that hegemony was basically exercised in economic-political aspects of society. And in these very important spheres of society, hegemony was actually the combination of two major elements; the first was 'coercion' and other 'consent' or 'collaboration'. The later was actually won through the methods, adopted by the ruling elite for controlling the ruled, for instance the ruling groups provided, 'cultural freedom' to the common people, 'material good and even to some extent 'political power' to the masses. And, on the other hand, the majority of the common people were inclined to participate in hegemonic system, rather to suffer from the serious hardships and difficulties of the consequences of coercion.

'Coercion' was actually an opposite element to consent, but equally important in the context of establishment and continuation of hegemony, but the establishment of hegemony by consent and collaboration thus proved to be a modern and peaceful tactic of this new era. The consent was also achieved by orientating 'the ruled' towards the elite (ruling) discourses, so the values, assumptions, beliefs and attitudes in this very context, could be accepted as a matter of collective-good course as the most natural and valuable.⁶

While further delving deeply into the debate of dominance and hegemony, Gramsci contended that any

politically dominant class was also ideologically dominant; and it was able to maintain its position because the dominated classes accepted its moral and intellectual leadership. Actually Gramsci was interested in the studying the process of the slow, subtle and almost indivisible penetration of the moral and intellectual beliefs of the upper ruling class, into the minds of the classes below, and interestingly their acceptance or adherence to those ideas, often against their own interests. He also cited the example of voting of working classmen (or more often women), in favour of conservatives.

Gramsci further averred that, most of the time, political power in liberal democracies was exercised not through governmental use of force, but through a dominant view or ideology. This commonly held set of ideas and symbols legitimized existing rulers, helping them to win the citizen's consent or at least acquiescence. Thus, in a medieval feudal economy, where serfs (agricultural labors in bondage to the lords who owned the lands they worked) were ruled over by an aristocracy, and the aristocracy by a monarch, a whole set of political structures and ideas had to be invented to legitimate and perpetuate the aristocracy's and monarch's exclusive control of property.

Being a Marxist, Antonio Gramsci was immensely influenced by Karl Marx⁷, however, there exist certain differences between Marxist's conception of 'Hegemony' and 'dominance', and Gramscian theory.

Classical Marxist often viewed society as a kind of building, where the economy was the 'base' upon which sat a 'superstructure' of political, civil and cultural institutions and beliefs. On the other hand, Gramsci

suggested that the ideas and symbols of the ruling ideology were as powerful and determining as the economy. *Raymond Williams*, a British theorist of hegemony and dominance had suggested that “the relationship of base and superstructure is dialectical...each effects and changes the other.” According to Williams the economy and culture were the main determinants of society which caused the people to think or act by setting bounds and limits.⁸ Hence, the theory of hegemony undermined the economic foundation of classical Marxism by highlighting the crucial role of ideas and cultural institutions in shaping the lives, conditioning, and thoughts of the society.⁹

Antonio Gramsci actually saw the ruling forces of society in more complex manners than did Marx. Marx actually tended to portray society’s rulers as those, who owned the means of production: factories, land, machinery, whatever was used to produce goods. He further opined that the government and other institutions in a capitalist society were dominated by capitalists as the later monopolized the economic resources. Thus rendering the state helpless. According to him, that the state was simply the ‘committee for managing common affairs of the bourgeoisie.’¹⁰

Gramsci, on the other hand, did not reduce the ruling forces of society solely to the capitalist class, but saw society as governed, at any given time, by ‘historical blocs’. These blocs were representing for the shifting coalition of interests and the political interests of these blocs often converged. The commonality of economic interest among these blocs further fostered their ideological ties. But the later were always subjected to their economic interests. These blocs comprised

heterogeneous class having common economic interests. As, it has also been discussed before, that Gramsci, defined hegemony as the process by which the dominant classes or class factions, through their privileged access to social institutions, propagated values that reinforced their control over politics and the economy. These particular values actually formed a dominant ideology.

In this context, Antonio Gramsci also ascribed five major meanings to the term 'Hegemony', including both implicit and explicit meanings. According to Gramsci that Hegemony was actually much more than simple domination because of its more subtle dimensions: 'military' or 'power of Danda (Stick)' the hegemon had the strongest military, comparatively stronger than any of its rivals. Its alliances system in this very context was comparatively stronger than that of its rival; the hegemon's considerable economic clout on account of its control over economy by maintaining formidable economic alliance amongst the exploitative classes: the hegemon had a wide range of political allies and friendly relations; the hegemon working with its allies, exerted dominant influence on the ruling elites which govern eco-political relations. The hegemon along with its allies, usually controlled most of the concerned institutions. Thus, most of the policies of these institutions favoured the hegemon and its allies; the hegemon largely determined the terms of discourse in its relations. And, in this very context taking cue from the Marx, Gramsci alluded the fifth meaning of hegemony as the ability to define the dominant discourse in the realm of ideas. As Karl Marx had equated that the ruling ideas of any age as the ideas of the ruling class. Antonio Gramscic had further described the unifying role played by the dominant ideology as it facilitated in holding

the people belonging to diverse ethnic stocks together in this very context, Gramsci also explained that how the common people were oriented toward the dominant ideology. Thus affecting their consciousness and the people were actually influenced by the prevailing consciousness,¹¹ to such an extent that they tended to internalize it, thus constituting the common sense of the society.

Gramsci considered the ideology of hegemony was actually very crucial as it involved the tendency of the ruling powers to assert its dominance but without hegemony i.e. at the same time to create collaborative alliances, ideas, and even institutions. Hegemony thus embodied both the coercion and the consent. Consent, which was actually an outcome of intellectual and moral hegemony, while political hegemony referred to domination. Generally hegemony combined both the powers, of military (danda) and economic power with the soft power of politics (democratic). Antonio Gramsci further explained that hegemony in terms of the combination of force (coercion) and consent in parliamentary regime.

Gramsci actually highlighted the exercise of Hegemony in parliamentary regimes, he believed that there was also the synthesis of force (coercion) and consent, which actually characterized these kind of regimes, and secondly these elements of combination balanced each other, not only at upper and general levels of stage and society, but also at lower and local levels.¹² As, in Gramsci's own words, "The 'normal' exercise of hegemony on the now classical terrain of the parliamentary regime is characterized by the combination of force and consent, which balance each other

reciprocally, without force predominating excessively over consent. Indeed, the attempt is always made to ensure that force will appear to be based on the consent of the majority, expressed by the so-called organs of public opinion—newspapers and associations...which therefore, in certain situations, are artificially multiplied. Between consent and force stand corruption and fraud.¹³

Gramsci also highlighted the economic aspect of hegemony by equating it with ethical-political as well as ethical economic domination. He further pointed out that hegemony in its very essence was the collaborative relation of forces at highest level. He elaborated that there existed “democratic relations” between “Hegemonic classes” or leading groups and “led”. He further maintained that hegemony could also exist under ‘democracy’ as the ruling elites, on the one hand enticed support of the “led” and on the other hand continued to exploit them as well thus enabling them to legitimize their dominance in both economic and political spheres.

Gramsci further described that the spontaneous consent by masses to the rule of dominant social group¹⁴ as social hegemony. He actually averred, “the spontaneous consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is historically caused by the prestige, which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production.”¹⁵ He also emphasized that the role of cultural institution maintaining the social hegemony, was very basic and important. And, these specific institutions included, the family, religious organizations and propaganda.¹⁶ In this manner, the philosophy, culture, values and morality of

the ruling elite, become the accepted norms, and also came to appear as the natural order of things.¹⁷

Antonio Gramsci has also made a distinction between political society and civil society. He contended that modes of establishing dominance in both the societies were different. He contended political society was maintained by the public institutions such as the government, police, armed forces, and the legal system. On the other hand, by civil society, he meant a society established or held together by non-coercive institutions i.e. cultural and religious institutions, he also included in this society the institutions, such as schools, trade unions, political parties, cultural associations¹⁸, clubs, the family etc. He placed schools in both categories. In this context, Gramsci actually appeared to be influenced by the Marxist notion of society as constituting a dialectical relationship between the society as the base (the mode of economy and the relationship between labour and capital) and the superstructure (government, army, police, social institutions, schools, churches, etc) to articulate a subtle theory of power. He also explained how the ruling class ruled courtesy of the productive relations (capital versus labour); coercive institutions (the state or political society) and civil society and all other non-coercive institutions, established their hegemony over various social groups.

Antonio Gramsci also threw light on the tactics of establishing hegemony: over subaltern¹⁹ groups by the dominant groups in the state and society. He explained that they did this, by eliminating or subordinating the opposing forces, and also by winning active or passive consent and collaboration of subaltern 'allies'. This actually implied that the process of attaining hegemony involved

both attaining consent and collaboration among allies and using force against enemies.²⁰

In this similar context, Antonio Gramsci also talked about the interdependence of forces and consent, as he described, "the methodological criterion on which our own study must be based is the following: that supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as 'domination' and as 'intellectual and moral leadership'. A social group dominates antagonistic groups which it tends to 'liquidate, or to subjugate perhaps even by armed force; it leads kindred and allied groups. A social group can, and indeed must, already exercise 'leadership' before winning governmental power (this indeed is one of the principal condition for the winning of such power); it subsequently becomes dominant when it exercises power, but even if it holds it firmly in its grasp, it must continue to 'lead' as well."²¹

Antonio Gramscic again highlighting the economic base of hegemony, did not seem to subscribe with the Croce's²² view who described hegemony as ethical political whereas Gramsci laid much stress on the ethical economic aspects of hegemony as he believed that it "must necessarily be based on the decisive function exercised by the leading group in the decisive nucleus of economic activity."²³

Gramsci has also delved deeply as regards the role of intellectuals in the maintenance of the hegemony of the ruling classes. He contended that the intellectuals performed a special function of such kind of directing the consent of the masses in support of the dominant class. And in the context of its relation to state power; Gramsci

believed that consent was actually more effective in establishing and maintaining dominance.²⁴

Gramsci further highlighted this concept by contending that hegemony is exercised in the context of 'consent' with respect to class 'allies and collaborators, and 'coercion' or force in respect to class enemies, and also described the hegemony of powerful social group revealed itself in two ways as domination and as 'intellectual and 'moral leadership'.²⁵

The crux of this theory of dominance and hegemony of Antonio Gramsci may be described in these words: that 'Hegemony was actually the combination of two interrelated concepts, with full-fledge practicability, one is 'consent' (collaboration) and second is 'force' (coercion); according to him, the crisis of hegemony was caused by two factors: 'crisis of authority' and second was the 'crisis of the state'; he further concluded the eco-politically dominant class would also be ideologically dominant, because the other classes would accept the intellectual and moral leadership of the concerned dominant class; Gramsci also told that there would be slow, subtle, and almost invisible penetration, of the intellectual and ethical beliefs and faiths of upper and elite (powerful) classes into the minds of below classes of society; he also pointed out in this very context that the lower and dominated classes would unconsciously accept these ideologies which were constructed and propagated by elite classes but these specific ideologies would often against the interests of these subaltern classes; He further pointed out that the economic interests of dominant groups would unconsciously be adopted and even protected by the subordinate and subaltern classes. Antonio Gramscic also concluded that the ideas of ruling classes become

dominant and pervasive thoughts of society; He further concluded that the ruling historical blocs actually based on convergence of political and economic interests.

Similarly, the Subaltern School of Historians (of India) also focuses on the paradigms and practices of Dominance, Hegemony and Subordination; in which Ranajit Guha's vision, "Dominance without Hegemony" is comparatively more significant. This actually provides deep insight into the modes of domination, subordination and hegemony in the light of this very vision of Guha.

Ranajit Guha²⁶ is one of the main exponents of the subalterns' school of historians.—a school of historians which brought a paradigm shift in the focus of scholarly attention of historians from "elites" to common people. Amongst the other distinguished historians of subaltern school include, Shahid Amin²⁷, David Arnold²⁸, Partha Chaterjee²⁹, David Hardiman³⁰ and Gyan Pandey³¹.

Actually, Ranajit Guha borrowed this very concept of 'Subaltern' (Inferior ranks/lower or working classes/the poor/proletariates/ unprivileged classes) from Gramsci and attempted to apply to the colonial and post-colonial situations in India. In post-colonial context of Indo-pak subcontinent, British Raj had produced such an aristocratic mentality(Ruling class) that reflected itself as like their colonial *masters*; and this whole phenomenon was truly depicted in the ideas of subaltern school: particularly in Guha's theoretical paradigm "Dominance without hegemony" that dominance of upper classes is being practiced over subalterns through neo-colonial approaches. Basically, Antonio Gramsci claimed that the history of the subaltern classes was just as complex as the history of the dominant classes. He actually contended

that the history of the subaltern social groups was necessarily fragmented and episodic. He viewed them as subservient to the ruling groups.

He also attempted to define their subalternity in terms of inability to make their own representation; their less privileged access over cultural and social institutions. He actually suggested that the only recourse available to these very classes as was to break their subordination was basically to organize themselves on revolutionary lines. He further opined that even such kind of eventuality could to happen immediately.³²

These ideas went a long way towards inspiring a group of Marxist historians that tried to develop new perspective towards history. Another simultaneous development which further reinforced this trend which was actually the work of another ‘Marxist historian E.P. Thompson³³, who broke new grounds in historiography, by expounding the concept of “history from below.”

In 1966, E.P. Thomson published an article, entitled, “History from Below” in a journal, name “The Times Literary supplement.”³⁴ And, with the publication of this very article, this very concept of “History from Below” acquired popular parlance.³⁵ And in the year, 1985, a volume of essays entitled “History from Below” also published. Actually, this very concept of History was an inspiration for those distinguished historians, who were interested in broadening the scope of history. These types of themes concerning ‘common people’ were considered outside the purview of history by traditional historians engrossed with traditional themes.

This particular trend towards the “history of lower classes’ received further boost up, when a group of

historians as mentioned earliest, founded a new school of Histories, named 'Subaltern School of History'. This very subaltern studies group also launched a journal, entitled, 'Subaltern Studies'.³⁶

The subaltern authors focused by and large the historical experiences of such individuals, who were ignored by mainstream histories. This group actually attempted to promote a systematic discussion, focused around, class, caste, gender and work environment. The purpose of the subaltern studies project was to redress the imbalance which was created in academic work as an outcome of tendency to focus on elite culture in South Asian historiography.

Ranajit Guha's vision of 'Dominance without Hegemony' can be better comprehended in this context. This elitist historiography according to 'Ranajit Guha', "needs to be resolutely contested by developing an alternative discourse based on recognitions of the subaltern domain of politics."³⁷ Thus, main focus of subaltern historians was to explore those particular historical experiences of the common people, who were altogether ignored by mainstream historians, writing elitist history. In this backdrop, the main aim of the 'Subaltern Historians' could be considered as an attempt to provide a richer synthesis of historical understanding by merging that the history of every day experience of the common masses with the subject matter of more traditional type of history.

This very vision is amply reflected in Ranajit Guha's article, entitled "Dominance without Hegemony and its Historiography", which is actually a part of Ranajit Guha's collection of essays, *Dominance without Hegemony*:

History and power in Colonial India. In this essay Guha defines the condition and eventual failure of British dominance alongwith theoretical exposition of dynamics of power politics in India.

RANJIT GUHA'S IDEA OF DOMINANCE WITHOUT HEGEMONY

Ranajit Guha's defines 'History' in terms of dominance, hegemony, power and money; and further elaborates that 'hegemony' is actually a particular condition of dominance³⁸ and these both concepts have actually deep and direct relationship with each other.³⁹ According to Guha that "power simply stood for a series of inequalities between the rulers and the ruled even between classes, strata and individuals. But, the nature and concept of 'subordination' cannot be understood except in context of a binary relationship with 'dominance'."⁴⁰

He in fact has delineated a comprehensive socio-political ideology about his vision. This particular ideology is also conceived as an organize composition of power. Guha actually describes a 'general configuration of power'⁴¹ in the context of dominance and subordination.⁴² The most recurrent theme of Ranajit Guha essay is, to restore "the self-directedness of both collaboration' and 'Resistance' among the natives or the ruled."⁴³

According to 'Ranajit Guha', the relationship between 'Dominance' and 'subordination' is actually determined and even constituted by a pair of interacting elements⁴⁴ - 'Dominance' by 'Coercion' and 'Persuasion' and 'Subordination' by 'Collaboration' and 'Resistance'.⁴⁵ In fact the terms 'Dominance' and 'Subordination' complement each other. It is not possible that one would think, about 'Dominance' without 'Subordination', and

about 'Subordination' without 'Dominance'.⁴⁶ Actually these two very concepts 'Dominance' and 'Subordination' permit us to conceptualize the historical articulation of power⁴⁷, in all its manifestations in which the institutional, model, and discursive practices are important. Guha has illustrated the interaction between these two concepts by focusing or highlighting this general configuration of power.⁴⁸

As, it is being described thoroughly as under: these two specific terms (Dominance and Subordination) have actually deep rooted and direct relationship with each other, particularly, in the context of those established mechanism through which hegemony of the dominant classes is established and maintained. The dominance and subordination are the basic constituents of historical articulations of power. The mutual interaction of these two terms convey us the real essence of power in terms of "D/S", dominance-subordination relationship; the very essence of 'Dominance' and 'Subordination' is power, which is actually constructed by a pair of interacting elements—that 'Dominance' by 'Coercion' and 'Persuasion', and 'Subordination' by 'Collaboration' and 'Resistance';⁴⁹ by defining dominance in terms of D/S relations he implies that dominance cannot be conceived without subordination and subordination cannot be conceived without dominance;⁵⁰ he describes that coercion and persuasion as the main constituents of 'dominance', and resistance and collaboration (consent) as the main constituents of subordination;⁵¹ Ranajit Guha contends that 'Dominance' is established through 'Coercion' and 'Persuasion', but in this similar vain, the 'Subordination', which is directly an outcome of 'Dominance', can also be established 'on the ruled',

through 'Collaboration', which can also be considered as consent. This specific mode of 'collaboration' (consent) plays a vital role in establishment and perpetuation of 'dominance' of privileged classes, subordination of 'common people'. And the mutual interaction of these forces '(dominance and subaltern)' enables us to comprehend the dynamics of authority structure,⁵² Ranajit Guha again terms, 'hegemony', that it is actually particular condition of 'dominance' and as the organic composition of power (D/S) and in the context of the constituents of 'dominance', the 'persuasion' outweighs 'coercion'.⁵³ He further maintains that 'hegemony' also operates as a dynamic concept and established even more persuasive structure of 'dominance'; he also differentiates two types of hegemonic system. In the first category the hegemony is established through 'Dominance' in this system 'Coercion' out weighs 'Persuasion' where as in the second category where hegemony is established and maintained through 'Consent' or 'Collaboration' and in this case 'Persuasion' outweighs 'Coercion'. Now he further delves deeply into his main theme of 'Dominance without Hegemony' and explains that how 'Dominance without Hegemony' is established and maintained. He is of the view that in this context the collaboration or consent of the lower and working class plays a major role in maintaining the continuation of the dominance of privileged and subalternity of the lower classes.

He also highlights that how the elitist and privileged classes force the marginalized classes to compliance through very sophisticated and subtle tactics and in this manner they ensure their collaboration. He further maintains that through cultural hegemony this collaboration is generally ensured. The roots of this

cultural hegemony are firmly embedded in their well-entrenched socio-economic status which also determines their political status on which their political status is also posited.

Thus, they acquire such a position of strength that they become indispensable for the lower classes. The marginalized classes are left with no other alternative but to seek favors of the elitist classes for their sustenance. If, on the other hand they choose confrontationist course, neither they have the resources, position nor required class support, political clout and an access to influential circles to go for that alternative. Thus the privileged classes being aware of their well entrenched positions and as well as inferior status of the subaltern classes use very subtle tactic of luring them to solve their basic problems. Moreover, they also use the network of *Baradari* lineage to entice the support of the lower classes and the later also feel that though these connections, their interest could be better served. Therefore, at rural level the network of *Baradari* serves as a point of convergence of interest of both classes. Hence, for the elitist groups this serves as the instrument of ensuring collaboration of the lower classes as well as the most effective method of maintaining their political dominance (as the electoral politics is based on *Baradaris*). On the other hand, for the lower classes it enables them to maintain a collaborative relationship with the dominant classes to redress their basic problems.

Guha has further highlighted the Indian Colonial situation in the light of his vision of 'Dominance without Hegemony' and inferred the elements of coercion, persuasion, collaboration and consent, from the Indian colonial context.⁵⁴ While describing the general configuration of power⁵⁵, he has identified the tactics and

methods employed by dominant classes to establish their hegemony and reduce the lower class to a subordinate status.

Guha's analysis provides a very penetrating insight into the modes of domination and subordination and this may be also very intrusive for us in comprehending the realities of power politics and social stratification in the context of the political situation of the United subcontinent and its local units particularly after partition. As, it has been discussed earlier, that his vision of 'Dominance without hegemony' constitutes the main theoretical paradigm of subaltern school of Historians to seek neo-colonial realities in third world countries with particular references of Marxist, Gramcian, and Guha's theories.

These perspectives of dominance, hegemony and subordination are not only instrumental in comprehending the power realities of the third world countries, as the power politics, of third world countries evidently testifies to this operationalization of hegemony, dominance (of higher/elite classes on lower/working classes) and subordination (of lower classes by the elite classes). This very insight is also intrusive to assess the dynamics of power politics in the subcontinent, especially in post-colonial contexts.

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¹ Karl Marx (1818-1883), German Social Philosopher and Revolutionary; with Friedrich Engels, a founder of Modern Socialism and Communism, Marx studied law and philosophy; he rejected the idealism of G.W.F. Hegel, but was influenced by Ludwig Feuerbach and Moses Hess. His editorship (1842-43) of 'Rheinsche Zeitung' ended when the people was suppressed. In 1844, he met with Engels in Paris, with him, he wrote *The Communist Manifesto* (1848) and other works that broke with the tradition of appealing to natural rights to justify social reforms, invoking instead the laws of history leading inevitably to the triumph of working class. Exiled from Europe after the revolution of 1848, Marx lived in London, and started work, on his monumental work *Das Kapital* (3 Vol. 1867) in which he used 'Dialectical Materialism' to analyze economic and social history. With Engels, Karl Marx founded (1864) The International Workingmen's Association; finally it can be truly be said that Marx was a great economic theoretician and the founder of economic history and sociology.² Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), an Italian political theorist. After rejecting socialism, Gramsci helped in finding (1921) the Italian communist party. As party chief (1924) he was elected to the chamber of deputies and remained member of parliament, 1924-26 when Mussolini outlawed the party. Gramsci was arrested in 1926 and spent his remaining years in prison (1926-37) of Massolini (1883-1945), when his writings, "letters from prison (1926-37), "the modern prince (1949)" and *Prison Notebook* (1971) proved him to be one of the leading neo-Marxist thinkers of the century. He actually worked on political, historical, social and economic theories and their theoretical practices. He basically made everlasting contributions, not only to Marxism, but also to social sciences of modern era. Basically, Antonio Gramsci talked about the tactics of establishing hegemony: over subaltern groups by the dominant groups in the state and society. He explained that they did this, by eliminating or subordinating the opposing forces, and

also by winning active or passive consent and collaboration of subaltern 'allies'. This actually implied that the process of attaining hegemony involved both attaining consent and collaboration among allies and using force against enemies. Subalterns, a term, which has been taken from Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), manuscript writings, means, 'of inferior rank', whether of class, caste, age, gender or office. But later on, this very term was used by "Subaltern School of Historians" in India which was founded by Ranajit Guha. As it is being described in Gramscic's own words: "They (elite and powerful groups) had to subordinate or eliminate the opposing forces and win the active or passive assent of the subaltern allies. A study of how these innovative forces developed and identify the phases through which they acquired autonomy vis-à-vis the enemies they had to defeat and support from the groups which actively or passively assisted them, for this entire process. It is precisely by these two yardsticks that the level of historical and political consciousness which the innovative forces progressively attained in the various phases can be measured. In this similar context, Antonio Gramsci also talked about the interdependence of forces and consent, as he described, "the methodological criterion on which our own study must be based is the following: that supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as 'domination' and as 'intellectual and moral leadership'. A social group dominates antagonistic groups which it tends to 'liquidate, or to subjugate perhaps even by armed force; it leads kindred and allied groups. A social group can, and indeed must, already exercise 'leadership' before winning governmental power (this indeed is one of the principal condition for the winning of such power); it subsequently becomes dominant when it exercises power, but even if it holds it firmly in its grasp, it must continue to 'lead' as well."

³ Bill Ashcraft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *Key concepts in Post-Colonial Studies* (London: Routledge 11, New Fetterlane, 1998) 116-117.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Karl Marx (1818-1883), German Social Philosopher and Revolutionary.

⁸ Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 34.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Antonio Gramsci, *Selection from the Prison Notebook* (Chennai: Orient Longman Private Ltd., 1996), 12.

¹² Ibid., 80.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ David Sallah, *Class Domination and Ideological Hegemony*, In the TV Establishment. Programme for profit and power, ed. Gaye Tuchman, Englwood Cliffs (MJ: Prentice Hall, 1974), 166.

¹⁵ Gramsci, *Selection from the Prison Notebook*, 12.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ C Boggs, *Gramsci's Marxism* (London: Pluto Press, 1976), 39.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Subalterns: Lower and working classes; having the basis of poverty and lack of opportunities of all kinds, by the elite and privileged classes. Actually Subalterns is a term, which has been taken from Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), manuscript writings, means, 'of inferior rank', whether of class, caste, age, gender or office. But later on, this very term was used by "Subaltern School of Historians" in India which was founded by Ranajit Guha.

²⁰ As it is being described in Gramscic's own words:

"They (elite and powerful groups) had to subordinate or eliminate the opposing forces and win the active or passive assent of the subaltern allies. A study of how these innovative forces developed and identifies the phases through which they acquired 1. autonomy vis-à-vis the enemies they had to defeat and 2. support from the groups which actively or passively assisted them, for this entire process. It is precisely by these two yardsticks that the level of historical and political consciousness

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which the innovative forces progressively attained in the various phases can be measured.

²¹Gramsci, *Selection from the Prison Notebook*, 57.

²² Croce, (1866-1952), an Italian Idealist Philosopher, historian, and a literary critic. His *Aesthetic as Science of Expression and General Linguistic* (1902), the first part of his major work, *Philosophy of Spirit* (1902-1917), was actually a landmark of modern 'Idealism' for his works of literary criticism and aesthetic, cultural history, and historical methodology. As a staunch anti-Fascist, he became a liberal party leader in 1943.

²³ Gramsci, *Selection from the Prison Notebook*, 161.

²⁴ Ibid., 57-58.,

²⁵ Ibid., 57.

26 Ranajit Guha, Indian social scientist, one of the most important founders of Subaltern school of historians India, which actually widened the scope and value of 'History'. Subaltern School of Historians has actually expended the focus of history with the addition of 'History of lower classes'.

27 Shahid Ameen is a Professor of Modern History at the University of Delhi. He is the author of Even Metaphor; Memory: Chauri Chaura 1922-1992 (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995), and editor of Concise Encyclopedia of North Indian Peasant Life (Delhi: Manohar, 2004). He was also a reader in Jamia Millia Islamia (Delhi), he wrote many other books and articles including Sugarcane and Sugar in Gorakpur: An Inquiry into peasant production for capitalist enterprise in Colonial India (Delhi, 1984).

28 David Arnold is a Professor of South Asian History at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London and he was a lecturer in the Department of History at the University of Lancaster. He is also the author of many articles and publications mainly including, The Congress in Tamilnadu: Nationalists Politics in South India 1919 to 1937 (Delhi 1977), Police Powers and Colonial Rule: Madras 1858-97 (Delhi 1986), Famine: Social crisis and Historical change (1988), and Colonizing the Body: State

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²⁹ Partha Chatterjee is Professor of Political Science, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta. He is the author of, *Arms, Alliances and Stability: The Development of the Structure of International Politics* (Delhi, London and New York: 1995), *Bengal 1920-1947: The Land Question* (Calcutta: 1985), and *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World* (London and Delhi: 1986).

30 David Hardiman was firstly an Honorary visiting fellow of the Centre for studies in Social Studies Calcutta. He is the author of *The Peasant Nationalists of Gujarat: Kheda District 1917-1934* (Delhi: 1981), he was also teacher of political science at the University of Leicester and was a fellow of the Centre for Social Studies. He is also the author of *The Coming of the Devi: Adivasi Assertion in Western India*. He is now a Simon Research Fellow at the University of Manchester. And he has edited Peasant Resistance in India 1858-1914 (1992).

31 Gyan Panday was a fellow in History at the Centre for studies in Social Sciences, Calcutta, and was a visiting fellow at the South Asian History Section of the Research School of pacific studies, Australian National University, Canberra. He is now Professor of 'History' at University of Delhi. He is the author of *The Ascendancy of the Congress in Uttar Pradesh, 1926-34* (Delhi: 1978), *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India* (Delhi: 1990), *The Indian Nation in 1942* (Calcutta: 1988). He has also edited, a volume of Essays on Quit India Movement'.

32 Gramsci, *Selection from the Prison Notebook*, 12.

33 E P Thompson (1924-1993) was a British Socialist and historian. He was also popular as peace campaigner. He is actually best known in academic circles for his historical work on the British radical movements in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, particularly in the context of his book *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963). He also worked on the biographies of William Morris and 'William Blake', which were later on published, he was also a working journalist and very

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prolific essayist. He was also the author of one novel, and one collection of poetry.

He was also one of the main intellectual members of the communist party, but he left the party, after the Soviet invasion of Hungary. He was actually a left-wing socialist critic of labour governments of 1964-70 and 1974-79 and during the 1980s he was the leading intellectual, in the context of these movements which were started against nuclearization of Europe. E P Thompson's book, *The Making of the English Working Class* is actually a seminar work on this subject work.

34 E P Thompson, 'History from Below', *The Times Literary Supplement*, 7 April 1966, 279-80.

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36 Subaltern Studies Project: This project has actually been started with a full-fledged production of subaltern studies, in which the essays relating to the history, politics, economics and sociology of subalternity as well as, to the attitudes, ideologies and belief systems of the subaltern classes, were produced which actually give impetus to the subject of 'History' itself.

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IQBAL AND HIS CHANGING CONCEPT OF TASAWWUF

HAIDER ALI AGHA

GOVERNMENT SHALIMAR COLLEGE

LAHORE

ABSTRACT

This research article is revised version of the paper presented at conference organized by NIHCR in December 2016. It intends to explore the changing conceptions of *Tasawwuf* in Iqbal's philosophical and poetical works, a process which represents transition from universally all-inclusive *wahadat-ul-wajud* to notion of inelastic *Khudi* or Ego in his thought. The paper argues that Iqbal's transformation was shaped more by political mission of Muslim imperial regeneration than by pure philosophical thought-process aimed at human kind at large. Muhammad Iqbal is regarded as one of the greatest Muslim thinkers of the twentieth century and also as the ideologue of Muslim nationalist state in India. Iqbal's experience of the social and political contradictions, implicit and explicit both in Indian society and Europe, changed his outlook drastically. He abandoned the more universalistic thought of *tasawwuf* which embodied content of different religions and became inclined to sharia-based *tasawwuf, wahadat-ul-shahud* whose chief exponent he found in Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind. This paper seeks to analyze the arguments developed by him to renounce his former position on *tasawwuf* and also

highlights the contradictions which his new position brought up.

KEY WORDS

Iqbal, *Tasawwuf*, *Wahadat-ul-Wajud*, *Wahadat-ul-Shahud*, Muslim Nationalist.

Sufism or *at-Tasawwuf* aims at esoteric or inward (*batin*) aspect of Islam based on contemplation of divine and eternal realities. It is usually distinguishable from outward (*zahir*) or exoteric aspect of Islam based on dictates of the Quranic Laws or *Shariah*.¹ Iqbal's ideas on Sufism and philosophy are also found in his letters and articles which make manifest the changes his mind was passing through. Iqbal's philosophical conception and his admiration for *Wahadatul wajud* underwent change during his 3-year stay in England and Germany when he completed his doctoral dissertation. This paper traces the Iqbal's early conception of Sufism in *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, his essays edited and published by B. A Dar and his poetical work in *Bang-i-Dara* and *Javid Nama*. Iqbal's revolt against *wahadat-ul-wajud*, which developed into his inelastic conception of Ego in *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, his letters, essays and in his Persian poetical works in *Asrar-i-Khudi* (Secrets of Self) and *Rumuz-i-Bekhudi* (The Mysteries of Self).

Tasawwuf exalts the ideal of *faqr* (poverty) and enjoins control over unruly desires for pleasures. The Sufis express their love for God by getting themselves occupied in *dhikr* (rememberance of God) and tread the *tariqa* (Path) in order to achieve special relationship with God and to have knowledge of Reality (*Haqiqah*). The *tariqa* leads them through repentance and *maqamat* (stations)

by raising the status of their relationship with God, to higher *ahwal* (ecstatic states) signifying their absolute trust in Him. These states culminate in the Sufi's *fana* (passing away) in order that his higher self may be adorned with attributes of God with a transformed personality which Sufis call *baqa* (survival).²

IQBAL'S EARLY CONCEPTION OF TASAAWWUF

Iqbal's early ideas about *tasawwuf*³ began with his admiration for Vedantic and *wahadatul wajud* of Ibne Arabi. Iqbal was raised in an environment imbued with Sufi influences. His father, Noor Muhammad, voraciously read Sufi writings particularly those of Ibne Arabi. His doctoral thesis *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia* (published in 1908) appreciated the spirit of Persian Sufism which contributed immensely to Islamic philosophy. As his experienced the socio-economic contradictions of both Indian society and Europe, his outlook changed drastically. He abandoned the more universalistic thought of *tasawwuf* which embodied content of different religions and became inclined to sharia-based *tasawwuf*, *wahadatul-shahud* whose chief exponent he found in Shaikh Ahmad of Sirhind.

Iqbal's early mystical conception had underpinnings of Vedanta and *wahadatul wajud* Iqbal in his letter to Shah Suleiman Phulwari expresses his love for Ibnu'l Arabi. He also tells about his father's fondness for *Futhat al Makkiya* (The Meccan Revelations) and *Fusul ul Hikam* (The Bezels of Wisdom) and his influence on him.⁴ As Dr. Bashir Dar argues that Iqbal was adherent of pantheism at the early stage of his philosophical development.⁵ The poetical work *Bang-i-Dara* evinces the transition from his

mystical views imbued with *vedantic* and Ibne Arabi's *wahdatul wajud* influences to his later rejection of what he called Persian *tasawwuf*. The Urdu poems written during 1901-5 exhibit Iqbal's pantheistic tendencies which echo the mystical ideas composed in any pantheistic and *vedantic* poetry. Indo-Sanskrit philosophical and poetic tradition enriched Iqbal's poetry in *Bang-i-Dara* where hymn of *Rig Ved*, *Gayatri Mantra* was translated in the poem *Aftab*.⁶ Even in *Bal-i-Gibrail*, little gem of Bhatrihari and also there is some mention of Vishwamitra and Bhartrihari in *Javed namah*.⁷ In *Bang-i-Dara* the poems like "Ram" and "Swami Ram Tirath" evince the impact of Indo-Sanskrit tradition on Iqbal. Iqbal also intended to translate into Urdu *Ramayana* and *Bhagvad Gita*.⁸ In *Tarana-i-Hindi*, and *Hindustani Bachon ka Geet*, he praises Hindustan as the best of all lands.⁹ In the Songs of Bhaktis, Iqbal combines the notions of power and peace. The salvation of all the inhabitants of the motherland (*des*) lies in love. He regards the messages of Shaikh of Ajmer and Guru Nanak as identical, both preaching the the Unity of God.¹⁰

In his essay 'The Doctrine of Absolute Unity as Expounded by Abdul Karim al Jilani', Iqbal admits 'the superiority of the Hindu in point of philosophical acumen'. He further adds that the Muslims in initial stages of their history did not and could not produce men like Kapila and Shankaracharya.¹¹ Iqbal shows profound interest in al-Jilli's doctrine of Absolute Unity or *wahdat al-wajud* and thinks it 'matter of regret' that 'Islamic thinkers' could not appreciate this kind of speculation. *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia* is Iqbal's earliest work on philosophy and mystical speculation. It shows his deep insight into western philosophy and eastern mystical

thought. In this work, his advocacy for Islamic origins of Sufism is profoundly maintained in these words: "No Idea can seize a people's soul unless, in some sense, it is the people's own. External influences may make it up from its deep unconscious slumber, but they cannot so to speak, create it out of nothing."¹² Having rejected the Orientalists' claims about the origins of *Tasawwuf* in Hellenic philosophy of neo-Platonism, Buddhism or Vedantaism, Iqbal enumerates various religious, political, cultural and social factors which led to the rise of Sufism. He ascribes the origins of Sufism to combined effects of these factors alongside 'innate tendency of Persian mind' to monism.¹³ He praises Indian Vedantist teaching that all pain is due to our mistaken attitude towards the Universe and man should change his thought rather than activity or will to avoid pain. Sufism, according to Iqbal, is golden mean or synthesis of Semitic strict code and Vedanta's ideas in the higher category of Love. On the one hand, it (Sufism), assimilates the Buddhistic idea of Nirvana (*Fana-Annihilation*), and seeks to build a metaphysical system in the light of this idea; on the other hand, it does not disconnect itself from Islam, and finds the justification of its view of the Universe in the Quran.¹⁴

Iqbal gives reference from the verse of the Quran to justify the Sufi's position on esoteric knowledge "wisdom". "As we have sent a prophet to you from among yourselves who reads our verses to you, purifies you teaches you the Book and the Wisdom, and teaches you what you did not know before." ¹⁵ He further says:" It can, I think, be easily shown that in the Quran, as well as in the authenticated traditions, there are germs of Sufi doctrine which owing to the roughly practical genius of

the Arabs, could not develop and fructify in Arabia, but which grew up into a distinct doctrine when they found favourable circumstances in the alien soils.”¹⁶ He is highly appreciative of the contribution of Persian mystical tradition. He holds Shaikh Shahab al Din also known as Shaik al Ishraq al Maqtul in high esteem. He praises him in these words: “His is the genuine Persian brain which, undaunted by the threats of narrow-minded authority, asserts its right of free independent speculation. In his philosophy, old Iranian tradition, which found only a partial expression in the writings of the physician of Al-Razi, Al-Ghazali, and the Isma’ilia sect, endeavours to come to a final understanding with the philosophy of this predecessors and theology of Islam.”¹⁷ He condemns those orthodox theologians or *Ulama* as ‘slaves of blood thirsty Dogmatism’ who instigated Al-Malik-Zahir, the son of Sultan Salah al Din to kill Shaikh al Ishraq. He regards Shaikh al Ishraq as ‘martyr of truth’¹⁸. He also profusely praised Ismaili’s allegorical method, a method later adopted to interpret the Quran.¹⁹. Iqbal makes sympathetically objective appraisal of ‘assassins’ movement which is imputed to Ismailis. He thinks it was ‘the most barbarous persecution which drove the Ismailis to pay red-handed fanaticism in the same coin’.²⁰ In *Stray Reflections*, Iqbal admired Hafiz’s poetry and his spiritual awareness thus: “In words like cut jewels, Hafiz put the sweet unconscious spirituality of the nightingale.”²¹

IQBAL’S REVOLT AGAINST WAHDAT AL-WAJUD AND ‘PERSIAN’ SUFISM

When Iqbal returned from Europe, his ideas of *Tasawwuf* were radically altered. In his essay “Islam and Mysticism”

he uses the words 'dusky valleys for Hellenic-Persian Mysticism' in which Moslem 'prefers to roam about'.²² He criticizes Persian mysticism as 'self- mystification and Nihilism which seeks 'Reality in quarters where it does not exist. He calls it 'physiological symptom which gives me a clue to the decadence of Muslim world.'²³ He takes to task the Persian *tasawwuf* thus: "The tendency to ignore the Law of God (*Sharia*) was a direct consequence of a false Mysticism born out of heart and brain of Persian."²⁴ This 'Persianisation of Islam' was responsible for the relapse of 'Moslem Democracy into pretended Spiritual Aristocracy'. In the same vein, he says: "The conquest of Persia meant not the conversion of Persia to Islam, but the conversion of Islam to Persianism."²⁵ He condemns the Ismailis allegorical method and distinction of knowledge into exoteric and esoteric. He concludes his essay with this preaching. "Come, then out of the fogs of Persianism and walk into the brilliant desert sunshine of "Arabia."²⁶

Iqbal embarks on the journey to restore the pristine purity of Arabian Islam which to him was the true Islam of Prophet Muhammad and his companions. Iqbal who was not only a 'Neo-Platonist but also full-fledged pantheist in his youth up to 1908²⁷ became a great adversary of Persian Sufism. He adopted Rumi as his guide in *Javidnama*, *Payam-i-mashriq*, *Bal-i-Jibrail* and *Asrar-i-Khudi* but 'though he ignored all those passages in Rumi's *mathnawi* which could be interpreted pantheistically. He only acknowledged personalistic elements in his mysticism.²⁸ *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia* was not translated into Urdu in Iqbal's life as his conscience was not easy with this work. He became least

interested in its publication by 1917 and no subsequent edition of it appeared during Iqbal's life time.²⁹ Eighteen years after its publication, a friend of Iqbal requested him to get it translated into Urdu but Iqbal refused this entreaty by replying that his ideas had passed through revolutionary transformation.³⁰ The experiences of cultural alienation and colonial or racial prejudices in Europe affected the highly sensitive mind of Iqbal. He went to Europe as an advocate of pantheism and came back as the bitter critic of it. As he himself said, "Europe's environment made me a Muslim."³¹ Iqbal returned from Europe as a transformed personality.

The question which seriously occupied his mind was: what caused the Muslim to lose their dominance over the world or what caused the decline and loss of Muslim power and glory in the world? The answer he found lay in negating his formerly held conception of *tasawwuf*. It was Persian Sufism which led to the decline of Muslim power and also led the Muslims to deviate from true and pure Islam. The conception of *wahdat-al-wajud* that he cherished and espoused formerly began to appear as malady afflicting Muslim society. He thought Sufism taught other-worldliness or withdrawal from the world had eschewed the strife and activity which is the mode of existence of Ego or *Khudi* as he called it. Whether Rumi or Western Voluntarism led to Iqbal's dissatisfaction with Vedantic pantheistic mysticism is not clearly known as Professor B.A Dar surmises. However, his *Asrar-i-Khudi* was modelled on the style of famous Rumi's *mathnawi* as Nicholson observes in the introduction to the translation of *Asrar-i-Khudi*.

***KHUDI (EGO, PERSONALITY OR INDIVIDUALITY) ANTI-THESIS
OF FANA (ANNIHILATION OF SELF)***

Asrar-i-Khudi was the first book he wrote after his return from Europe which unmistakably shows the influence of Fichte, Bergson and Nietzsche. He reproduced “several anecdotes from *Thus Spake Zarathustra* with minor changes. The chapter on the names of Ali expounds his doctrine of Will to Power. But none of them is mentioned by name.³² Iqbal stated that “the other words for the metaphysical fact of the ‘I’ are equally bad, e.g., I-AM, shakhs, nufs, and unaniyat”. He wanted a “colourless word” in order to express the concept of self or ego, “having no ethical significance.” At last, “considering the requirements of verse,” Iqbal adopted *Khudi* as the most appropriate term to denote the self. He stated: “Thus metaphysically the word *Khudi* is used in the sense of that indescribable feeling of ‘I’, which forms the basis of the uniqueness of each individual. Metaphysically it does not convey any ethical significance for those who cannot get rid of its ethical significance. Ethically the word *Khudi* means (as used by me) self-reliance, self-respect, self-confidence, self-preservation, even self-assertion, when such a thing is necessary, in the interests of life and the power to stick to the cause of truth, justice, duty, even in the face of death.”³³ Dictating his views to Nazir Niyazi in 1937, Iqbal clearly stated that *Asrar-i-Khudi* is based upon two principles:

a) “That personality is the central fact of the universe;

b) That personality, 'I-am' is the central fact in the constitution of man".³⁴

This concept of personality, Iqbal pointed out, is illuminated in the second chapter of the *Asrar-i-Khudi*; for instance:

The form of existence is an effect of the Self,
Whatsoever thou seest is a secret of the Self.
Its self-deceptions are the essence of Life;
Like the rose, it lives by bathing itself in blood.
For the sake of a single rose it destroys a hundred rose
gardens,
And makes a hundred lamentations in quest of a single
melody.
When life gathers strength from the Self.
The river of life expands into an ocean.³⁵

This passage in the *Asrar* has tone of Neitzschean doctrine of will to power. Iqbal sought to attack *wahdat-ul-wajud* of Shaikh-i-Akibar Ibne Arabi as Ibne Arabi followed the point of view adopted by Sankra in the interpretation of Gita when he himself sought to interpret the Quran. In India pantheism remained the philosophical doctrine, but in Iran it went beyond its limits and in the hands of the poets and began to appeal to the heart, with the result that it reached every nook and corner of the Islamic world and became the main cause of social and political decay.³⁶ He categorically rejected all doctrines concerning *fana* which according to him was apt to destroy human personality and individuality. *Fana* for him was more dangerous than the destruction of Baghdad because it led to stagnation of intellectual life.³⁷

Thus, Iqbal assails the sacred institution of Sufis because he felt that they had turned into empty facades behind which no true religious life, nor genuine communion with the Divine was existing.”³⁸ The Sufi has taken the “Wine of the Day of Covenant as an excuse for doing nothing” as we see in the “poetry of Hafiz, Omar Khyyam and their imitator”.³⁹

He himself writes in one of his essays:

By Persian mysticism the enchantment of the heart, beauty and glamour have appeared in literature, but in such a way that human nature is debased by it. In Islamic mysticism, there appears power in the heart and the effect of this power is also exerted on literature.⁴⁰

Iqbal alluded to the Persians as employing weapon of mysticism of negation of self or *fana* in their sheep-natured vengeance against the ruling race of Arabs so that they power could be weakened. In chapter VI of the *Asrar*, Iqbal narrates a tale in allegory in which the sheep-herd was attacked by the tigers and the sheep in order to neutralize the power of the tigers invented the doctrine of self-denial and *fana*.

For Iqbal domination and power is the manifestation of *Khudi* which could develop in tiger-oriented Muslim awareness of *Khudi* and sheep-natured Sufi preaching of self-denial is its antithesis. He found in Hafiz, the famous Persian Sufi, the main advocate of self-denial whom he also calls theologian of the race of drunkards and the leader of helpless or *bechargan*. He warned Muslims to beware of Hafiz whose poetry he likened to ‘a cup of

deadly poison' who was snake in the grass and acted to lull his victim to sleep before administering poison.⁴¹ In *Asrar*, Iqbal subjects Plato to harsh criticism for being 'a sheep in man's clothing' and for poisoning the mind by his intoxication.⁴² The publication of *Asrar-i-Khudi* in 1915 was greeted with protest from different sections of literary and intellectual circles. The *mathnawi* was looked on as critique of Sufism.⁴³ The writers like Hasan Nizami, the custodian of dargah Nizam ud Din Aulia, protested against it. Iqbal sought the help of Akbar Allahbadi and Sayyid Sulayman Phulwari to settle the issue. In the second edition, he expunged the verses against Hafiz of Shiraz whom he accused of poisoning the minds of the people through his mysticism.⁴⁴ In the introduction to his translation of *Asrar-i-Khudi*, Professor Nicholson writes: "He (Iqbal) sees that Hindu intellectualism and Islamic pantheism have destroyed the capacity for action, based on scientific observation and interpretation of phenomena which distinguishes the Western people "and especially the English." Now this capacity depends ultimately on the conviction that *Khudi* (selfhood, individuality or personality) is real and not merely an illusion of mind."⁴⁵ The cry back to the Quran and back to Muhammad became allied with revolutionary force of western philosophy as Professor Nicholson notes.⁴⁶

Conquest and dominion are signs of strength,
Victory is the manifestation of Strength,
Those fierce tigers beat the drum of
sovereignty,
They deprive the sheep of the freedom,
One of the sheep which was clever and acute.

Old in years, cunning was a weather beaten
wolf,
Being grieved at the fate of his fellows
And sorely vexed by the violence of the tigers,
Made complaint of the course of Destiny
And sought by craft to restore the fortunes of
his race.

The weak, in order to preserve themselves,
Seek device from skilled intelligence.
In slavery, for the sake of repelling harm,
The power of scheming becomes quickened.
'Tis not possible, however much one exhorts
and counsels.
To create in a sheep the disposition of a wolf.
But to make the furious tiger a sheep—that is
possible:
To make him unmindful of his nature—that is
possible."

He became as a prophet inspired,
And began to preach to the blood-thirsty
tigers.
He cried out, "O ye insolent liars,
Who want not of a day of ill luck that shall
continue for ever!

I am possessed of spiritual power,
I am an apostle sent by God for the tigers.
I come as a light for the eye that is dark,
I come to establish laws and give
commandments.
Repent of your blameworthy deeds;
O plotters of evil, bethink yourselves of good!"

Whose is violent and strong is, miserable:
Life's solidity depends on self-denial.
The spirit of the righteous is fed by fodder:
The vegetarian is pleasing unto God,⁴⁷

In a letter to Shah Suleiman Phulwari, Iqbal states his belief that Ibne Arabi's teachings were not according to the Quran.⁴⁸ In another letter of 10 July, 1916 to Siraj ud Din Paal, Iqbal repudiates the teachings of *Fusul-al-Hikam* as *alhad and zandiqa* (apostasy and heresy).⁴⁹ After reading Louis Massignon's translation of and notes on *Kitab al Tawasin*, he wrote in letter to Aslam Jira Japuri dated 17 May, 1919 that this book helped him persuade of the correctness of the death sentence imposed on al Hallaj. He hoped that the new researches would expose Persian *tasawwuf* and its hidden relations.⁵⁰ It is irony that Rumi, whom Iqbal regards as his master in his poetry for the expression of his ideas, has made many allusions to Hallaj in his *Diwan* and *Mathnawi* calling him 'the martyr of love' and quoting his verse " kill me o' my trustworthy friends". Rumi, in contrast to Iqbal, regards Hallaj's dying as remaining faithful to the Prophetic tradition, 'die before ye die'.⁵¹ *Rumuz-i-Bakhudi* (The Mysteries of Selflessness), also a Persian poem like *Asrar*, was published in 1918. Arberry, in the Preface of translation of the *Rumuz*, comments on Iqbal's ideal community of the Selfhood of Muslim in these words: "In the *Rumuz*, Iqbal states the case for international Islam. In this phase of his life he was still thinking most intently of the possibility of a revival of caliphate, bringing together in single theocracy the 300,000,000 Muslims of the world."⁵² The community which this poem addresses is Muslim

rather than universal human community. The ego of individual Muslim is the reflection of that of community, as these lines in the *Prelude* show:

The link that bind the individual
To the Society a Mercy is;
His truest Self in the Community
Alone achieves fulfilment. Wherefore be
The individual a Mirror holds
To the Community, as they to him;⁵³

Aurangzeb became the paragon of Iqbal's *Khudi*. Iqbal prodigally praises Mughal King Aurangzeb Alamgir and his adherence to *Sharia* or the Quranic Law whose sword was like 'faith's torch which burnt to ground harvest of impiety. He terms the syncretic endeavours and secular ideas of Akbar towards the unity of Islam and Indic religions as heretic and those of Dara as source of corruption. The symbols of sword (*tegh, shamsir or talwar*) and hawk or Eagle (*Uqaab, shaheen*) are integral part of the activity of *Khudi* of *mard-i-momin*. The themes of conquest and *jihad* recur in *Asrar* and *Rumuz*. Aurangzeb Alamgir (d.1707) struck the *coup de grace* and 'the lightening of his sword' set ablaze harvest grown out of impious seeds of Akbar's syncretic heresy in Dara Shiko's soul.⁵⁴ His [Aurangzeb's] one aim of life was, as it were, to subsume the various communities of this country under the notion of one universal empire. The history taught. Aurangzeb that the strength of Islam in India did not depend, as his great ancestor Akbar had thought, so much on the goodwill of the people of this land as on the strength of the ruling race. Aurangzeb's political perception, though true, was too late. Yet considering the

significance of this perception he must be looked upon as the founder of Musalman [Muslim] nationality in India. I am sure posterity will one day recognize the truth of what I say.⁵⁵

The tigers fall into the artful devices of the sheep and hence the message to Muslims is that they have been weakened by Sufi quietism and self-annihilation, as Elizabeth Sirrieh observes.⁵⁶ Ahmad Sirhindi is usually considered Ibne Arabi's antagonist while Ibne Arabi is looked on as 'representative of Islamic pantheism'.⁵⁷ Iqbal's invitation to Muslims to follow the leadership of Mujaddid was not only consistent with his religious and political philosophy but was the corner stone of his ideas on Muslim dominance which as he saw, should be on world-wide scale.⁵⁸ Iqbal is profuse in his admiration for Abdullah ibne Wahab⁵⁹ in whom the' spirit of Ibn Taimiyyah's teaching found a fuller expression', and whose movement arose from the 'sands of Nejd' in the eighteenth century had immense potentialities. He thinks of his movement 'as the first throb of life in modern Islam and which inspired 'nearly all great modern movements of Muslim Asia and Africa. Iqbal likened him to Ghazali's disciple Muhammad Ibn Tumart, the 'Berber reformer who appeared amidst the decay of Muslim Spain'⁶⁰

CONCLUSION

Iqbal's quest for revivalist manifesto for Indians Muslims could not have been accomplished if he had continued to adhere to his former philosophical appreciation of *wahadat-al-wajud*. Although western racial prejudices and cultural arrogance led him to renounce his early ideas of unity of religions, the new structure he built also smacked

of Islamic racism when he spoke of sheep-natured Persians and tiger-like Arabs. To Iqbal, *Khudi* can only belong to a Muslim as Professor Nicholson remarks about Iqbal: "He is a religious enthusiast, inspired by the vision of a New Mecca, a world-wide, theocratic, Utopian state in which all Muslims, no longer divided by the barriers of race and country, shall be one..... It must be observed that when he speaks of religion he always means Islam. Non-Muslims are simply unbelievers, and (in theory, at any rate) the Jihad is justifiable, provided that it is waged "for God's sake alone."⁶¹

There is nothing like universal life. The man becomes more and more complete and individual by coming nearer to God. As he becomes 'completest' he absorbs God into Himself rather than he is absorbed into God, a condition which results in the death of his individuality.⁶² "In the higher Sufism of Islam, intuitive experience is not the finite ego effacing its own identify by some sort of absorption into the Infinite Ego; it is rather Infinite passing into the loving embrace for the finite."⁶³ As there is indeed a movement between God and man, it does not matter whether infinite absorbs finite or finite absorbs the infinite. The difference between God and man is individual's self by upholding inflated pride and individuality and seeking to absorb God into himself rather than absorbing himself into God. A follower of *wahdat al wajud* may wonder whether it is possible with this pride by keeping oneself individual to have any idea of God, let alone 'absorbing God into oneself. While Sufis like Hallaj, Ibne Arabi, Rumi and Hafiz saw truth in unity of all religions and preached love for whole of humanity, Iqbal turned to dominance of world through the development

of *Khudi* whose expression could be found in conquests and victories in war. Iqbal uses popular mystic images and motifs such *ishq*, *faqr*, *rind*, *qalandar* differently from how they are used by Hafiz, Rumi, Sanai and Omar Khyyam. *Qalandar* in their poetry transcends finitude of self, and distinctions of belief and unbelief. He is living in self-renunciation. Iqbal's connotation of *qalandar* is closer to conservative interpretation of Islam.⁶⁴

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³ The English word 'Sufism' is employed to translate *Tasawwuf* which, according to one point of view, is said to be derived literally from *suf* or wool which 'was the dress of eastern Christian and Muslim renouncers'. Its more common meaning was belonging to the faith and doctrine of the people called Sufis' or trying to become *Sufi*. See Baldick, *Mystical Islam: An Introduction to Sufism*, 3. The etymology or origin of word 'Sufi' or *tasawwuf* has been a matter of controversy among the writers of early texts about *tasawwuf*. Abu Nasr al Sarraj (d. 988), the author of one the earliest Sufi texts *Kitab al Luma fi al Tasawwuf* is of the view that the word 'Sufi' was current in the pre-Islamic days for excellence of virtue. In order to prove this point, he refers to History of Mecca by Muhammad bin Ishaq bin Yasir and others. M. Hamiduddin, "Early Sufi: Doctrine", in *History of Muslim Philosophy*, edited by M M Sharif, vol. 1 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Publishing House, 1963), 311.

⁴ Bashir Ahmed Dar, *Anwar-i-Iqbal* (Lahore: Iqbal Academy of Pakistan, 1967), 178.

⁵ Bashir Ahmed Dar, *Iqbal and Post-Kantian Voluntarism*, 2nd ed. (Lahore: Bazam-i-Iqbal, 2000), 56.

⁶ Ghulam Rasul Mehar, comp., *Matalib-i-Kalam-i-Iqbal* (Lahore: Sheikh Ghulam Ali & Sons, 1997), 50. *Gayatri Mantra* hymn is found in all the four Vedas which Brahmins considered so pious that they even don't recite it in front of anyone.

⁷Brahmarshi Vishvamitra (viśvā-mitra) is one of the most venerated rishis or sages of ancient India. He is also credited as the author of most of Mandala 3 of the Rigveda, including *Gayatri Mantra*. The story of Vishvamitra is narrated in the Balakanda of Valmiki Ramayana. Mahabharata adds that

Vishvamitra's relationship with Menaka resulted in a daughter, Shakuntala, whose story is narrated in Adi Parva of *Mahabharata*. His story also appears in various Puranas; however, with variations from *Ramayana*. In *Jawed Namah* during their imaginary travel, Iqbal and Rumi move to some caves. In one of the caves they came across the spirit of the saint Vishvamitra. Iqbal has portrayed a very good picture of the cave and the cave dweller Vishvamitra.

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⁹ Ghulam Rasul Mehar, comp., *Matalib-i-Kalam-i-Iqbal* (Lahore: Sheikh Ghulam Ali & Sons, 1997), 123.

¹⁰ Ibid. 130. In his poem Hindustani Bachon ka Geet, Iqbal says: "Chisti nei jis zameen mein paigham-i-haq sunaya Nanak nei jis chaman mein wahdat ka geet gaya" It is rendered in English as the land in which Chishti delivered the message of God; The garden in which Nanak sang the song of Tawhid of God.

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THE POLITICS OF NAWABZADA NASRULLAH KHAN: THE FORMATIVE PHASE

BASHARAT HUSSAIN

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LAHORE

ABSTRACT

Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan had the longest political career among the politicians of Pakistan. There was hardly a major political crisis in which he was not involved in one way or the other. This article attempts to understand and analyse the first two decades of his political journey. Moreover, it explains the reasons behind his association with the Majlis-i-Ahrar-i-Islam. Furthermore, it attempts to assess how he conducted politics as an Ahrari and grew in the party hierarchy. In addition, with him being the focus, it takes stock of the Ahrar interactions with the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League during the electoral politics in 1937 and 1945-46. Lastly, it analyses how the nature of Ahrar politics shaped his political outlook in the formative years.

KEY WORDS

Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan, Majlis-i-Ahrar-i-Islam, Ataullah Shah Bokhari, Ahraris, All-India Muslim League, Unionist Party of Punjab.

Hardly any political history of the first four decades of Pakistan can ever forgo the name of Nawabzada Nasrullah Khan. His political career that spanned over

seventy years started almost two decades before the creation of Pakistan. Over time, he developed a reputation of a politician adept at conducting politics of opposition and cobbling together alliances of political parties of diverse hues and conflicting ideas. This paper attempts to explore, analyse and evaluate only the formative years of his politics before the formation of Pakistan.

Indulgence in politics in this part of the subcontinent has mostly been the affair of power elite. Nasrullah Khan as is evident from his title 'Nawabzada' was a scion of the 'titled feudal elite' of Khangarh in today's south Punjab. He belonged to the 'Yasinzai' tribe of Pathans who lived in the city of Ghazni in Afghanistan and eked living be means of trading.¹ At the beginning of the nineteenth century, his ancestors switched from trading to agriculture when they bought lands to settle in Khangarh and Muzzafargarh. The family gained political influence when his grandfather Allahdad Khan first helped the British against the Sikhs and subsequently assisted them in quelling the 'rebels' during the Indian 'War of Independence' in 1857 for which he was rewarded with 'Robes of Honour' and the Honorary Magistracy of the then district Khangarh.² Later on, Nasrullah's father Saifullah Khan was appointed as a 'provincial courtier' and bestowed upon the offices of Extra Assistant Commissioner and Munsif with the powers of a Second Class Magistrate.³ As his father continued to render services to the British Crown, he was awarded the titles of 'Khan Bahadur' in 1894 and 'Nawab' in 1910.⁴ After the death of his father who had four wives, the affairs of the family were assumed by Nawabzada Muhammad Abdullah Khan, a step-brother

of Nasrullah and about (25/30) years older than him. The step-brother continued with the family tradition of loyalty to the British and therefore became quite powerful by becoming an Honorary Magistrate, 'Numberdar' of four villages and President of the Zamindar Bank.⁵

This background reveals that Nasrullah's family was influential with access to the corridors of power. So, if he indulged in politics to become powerful is not surprising. What is intriguing is the choice of his political party – the Majlis-i-Ahrar-i-Islam (MAI) – which he joined around 1930,⁶ when he was a youth of twenty. His choice is intriguing for several reasons. Being a member of the 'titled gentry', his most obvious choice should have been the Unionist Party of the Punjab which was an amalgam of Hindu landlords and the Muslim aristocracy of the province. The other possible options were the Indian National Congress and the All India Muslim League. If he did not join the Congress, it could be that it was a predominantly Hindu organization with a few Muslims and if he did not join the League it was because the party had little roots in the province as it was more concerned with the Muslim politics in the United Provinces (UP) in the early 1930s although the League suited his class more because he did his intermediate from Aitchison College Lahore and his father was associated with Sir Sayyed Ahmed Khan's Mohammadan Educational Conference.⁷ Ideally, for a person of his class background, the Unionist Party should have been the most suitable choice especially when his family had traditionally been supportive of the Unionists and his influential elder step-brother Abdullah Khan was close to this party but this very fact turned out

to be the stumbling bloc because Nasrullah had strained relations with his powerful step-brother, who made his and his mother's life so miserable that their legal inheritance had to be placed in the official Court of Ward⁸ with M R Kayani, the Deputy Commissioner of Muzaffargarh (subsequently the Chief Justice of West Pakistan) being appointed as his official guardian in the Court of Ward.⁹

It was a mixture of hard life at the hands of his elder step-brother, a youthful romanticism, a desire to chart out an independent political course and friendship with the top Ahrar leader Syed Ataullah Shah Bokhari that propelled him to join the MAI. The Ahraris were people from lower and middle-class background to which Nasrullah did not belong to yet like them found himself in difficult financial circumstances at the hands of his step-brother. Similarly, while educated at the elite Aitchison College in Lahore and Emerson College in Multan from where he could not complete graduation owing to family reasons, he turned into a rebel to his class by joining the party which was anti-British and anti-imperialist in its political bearings. His 'revolt' seems less against his class and more against his overbearing dominating step-brother who was associated with the British Raj through elite titles and access to the corridors of power by being a member of the Punjab Legislative Assembly.¹⁰ In addition to being an anti-British party, the MAI had a religious colouring as it avowedly called for a 'jehad' to bring about an Islamic revolution¹¹ and emphatic commitment to anti-Qadianism.¹²

Overall, MAI was more of a religio-political party in which religious issues dominated politics mainly because its top leadership was a unique sectarian brew

consisting of Maulana Mazhar Ali Azhar who was a shia while Sahibzada Faizul Hassan was a Barailvi whereas Maulana Daud Ghaznavi was an Ahle-Hadith while Maulana Habib-ur-Rehman Lodhianvi belonged to the Deobandi school of thought.¹³ Moreover, the Ahrars held in great esteem the stalwarts of Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Hind such as Maulana Hussain Ahmed Madni, Mufti Kifayatullah, Maulana Hifz-ur-Rehman Seharvi, etc.¹⁴ and it was the influence of these nationalist ulema that not only kept the Ahraris in the Indian National Congress in the 1920s¹⁵ but also kept them engaged in a joint struggle with the Congress for Indian independence against British colonialism,¹⁶ however, this association broke when the Congress refused to take a top Ahrar leader Afzal Haq in its Executive Committee.¹⁷ The Ahrar leadership consumed its energies by indulging in political controversies such as the Kashmir Movement to protest against the oppression of the Muslims by the armed forces of the princely state of Kashmir; the Shaheed Ganj Mosque controversy and the propaganda campaign against the Ahmedis credentials of Zafarullah Khan when he was appointed a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, to name a few.¹⁸ It is not the objective of this paper to discuss in detail the Ahrar politics because that has been adequately done by Samina Awan in a research paper¹⁹ and a book.²⁰ The objective of this overview is to help us understand how the nature and style of Ahrari politics influenced the make-up of Nasrullah Khan in the formative years of his political career. Although the Ahrars shunned politics after the formation of Pakistan, the Ahrari connection never left its imprints on the nature and style of

Nasrullah's subsequent politics which was overtly conservative 'right wing.'

Having explained as to why he joined MAI, we must, now, investigate and analyse his growth as an Ahrari politician. His key link and mentor among the leading Ahrar leaders was Syed Ataullah Shah Bokhari, whom he invited to address a public meeting at a local mosque in Khangarh in 1933 which his step-brother Abdullah Khan tried to flop by locking the mosque,²¹ nonetheless Nasrullah was able to make alternative arrangement and the meeting remained successful as Ataullah Bokhari mesmerized the audience with his oratorical skills for several hours. In this way, he started the political journey with the Ahrars in his hometown. As an active member of the MAI, he enthusiastically plunged in the Kashmir Movement and was imprisoned for a political cause for the first time in 1931.²² For over a decade, he remained associated with the Ahrars and made his first serious bid for power in the general elections of 1945-46 on the Ahrari ticket in a triangular contest with Sardar Abdul Hameed Dasti of the Muslim League and Fazal Karim Qureshi of the ruling Unionist Party but badly lost to the League's candidate because the 'wave for Pakistan' had gripped Punjab by that time.²³ This election exposed him as more of an opportunist and less of an idealist Ahrari because he contested on the Ahrari ticket only after his request for a League's ticket was turned down.²⁴ Notwithstanding Nasrullah's losing confidence in the (MAI), the Party continued to trust him when he was nominated as a member along with another Ahrar leader Maulana Mazhar Ali Azhar to represent the Ahrars at a meeting convened by the nationalist Muslims at the office of

Jamiat-i-Ulema-i-Hind in Delhi on the eve of the Cabinet Mission in 1946 to propose their solution to the communal problem.²⁵ The nationalist Muslims presented the 'Parity Formula' also known as 'Madni Formula' which was rejected by the Congress and when the Ahrar leadership enquired from Gandhi the cause of rejection, he snubbed them by stating that the scheme of Pakistan was better than their formula and taunted that it was better if the Ahrars joined the League.²⁶

After dissociation from the Congress, the MAI held several rounds of meetings with Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah and other League leaders to reach some political understanding. The efforts bore fruition when they entered into an electoral alliance with the League at the time of the 1937 provincial elections, however, the alliance turned out to be more an act of opportunism on the part of the Ahrars because they thought that Jinnah had secured large amounts of funds from the rich Muslims of Bombay and the Raja of Mahmoodabad for the election campaign, but when they failed to squeeze some of that money out of Jinnah, they broke the alliance.²⁷ The Ahrars openly opposed Jinnah and the League for their idea of Pakistan. Ataullah Bokhari is on the record to have said, "I have failed to understand the theory of Pakistan"²⁸ and at the meeting of (MAI's) Working Committee in Lahore in March 1946, he not only branded the League's leadership as unislamic but also declared through a resolution that any decision by the League should not be construed as the decision of the entire Muslim community of India.²⁹ This very Ataullah Bokhari was the mentor of Nawabzada Nasrullah and the latter held the former in great reverence throughout his life which

is evident from the tribute paid by the Nawabzada in a December 1992 article in the monthly 'Naqeeb-e-Khatam-e-Nabowat.' He praised his mentor for opposing the feudal class, for fighting against British imperialism, for combating the Ahmadis on the issue of Khatam-i-Nabowat and for never currying any favour with the British masters.³⁰ Well! Ataullah Bokhari might not have sought any benefit from the British but many leading Ahrar leaders who otherwise publicly criticized the colonial masters were allegedly on the pay-roll of the Government.³¹ When the chaos of partition ensued, Ataullah Shah Bokhari along with his family moved to the comfort of Nasrullah's hospitality in Khangarh for almost a year.³² It was through the courtesy of Ataullah Bokhari that the Nawabzada climbed the ladder in the party hierarchy of MAI by becoming its secretary general,³³ and Nazim-i-Ala³⁴ as well as the editor of the party organ daily 'Azad' which he continued to edit even after the establishment of Pakistan.³⁵ In his capacity as the editor of this daily, a case was registered against him for writing a hard-hitting editorial against Master Tara Singh, when the fiery Sikh leader had brandished his 'Kirpan' (the Sikh religious sword) outside the Punjab Assembly in Lahore but the case was eventually filed after Partition.³⁶ This formative phase of Nawabzada's Ahrari politics ended when the Ahrars decided at their fateful January 1949 session in Lahore to concentrate only on the religious issues and suggested that those Ahraris who wished to continue politics could join the Muslim League; thus paving the way for Nasrullah Khan to join the League and start a new phase in his political career.³⁷

The association with Ahrars had profound effects on the nature and style of politics of Nasrullah Khan. Throughout his political career, he remained inclined towards 'right wing' politics be it the Nizam-i-Mustafa Movement of the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA) that destabilised Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's government in 1977 or the 'Shaukat-i-Islam' processions taken out in East Pakistan during the 1970 general elections. Moreover, in one way or another, he remained involved in the making and working of the rightist political alliances against the governments of the day. Furthermore, his oratorical skills were a legacy of great Ahrari orators such as Ataullah Shah Bokhari, Maulana Mazhar Ali Azhar, Sheikh Hussam-ud-Din, and Maulana Habib-ur-Rehman to name a few. The art of agitational politics that he learned from the platform of MAI was practiced by him throughout his life. Politically, he changed tacks from being a Muslim Leaguer to an Awami Leaguer but deep down, the Ahrari connection often lurked in his politics.

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